

NSC BRIEFING

19 January 1955

FAILURE OF COSTA RICAN REVOLT

- I. Apparent failure of Costa Rican revolt clearly in US interest--NOT because of merits or demerits of governments concerned, but because successful repetition of "Guatemala-type" coup would have provided dangerous precedent.
- II. As to specifics in Costa Rica -
  - A. Only area still held by rebels is in extreme northwest.
    1. Have some 500 men in area of La Cruz.
  - B. Against these, government has about 1,400 troops from town of Liberia northward some 30 miles.
    1. Government announced on 18 January that it had pushed rebels back north of Santa Rosa.
    2. Government unit reported preparing to cut rebel escape route north of La Cruz.
  - C. Rebel "air force" collapsing.
    1. Transport (C-47), piloted by American Jerry Delarm, destroyed in crash landing.
    2. Two AT-6's returned to Nicaragua, spotted by OAS observers, after which President Somoza sheepishly "interned" them.
    3. Fighter (F-47) has disappeared and is believed to be back in Guatemala.
    4. Thus, little threat of further rebel air action.

III. Internal support for rebels didn't develop.

A. Majority of Costa Ricans have no love for former presidents Calderon Guardia and Picado (in whose names rebels acting), because of their:

1. Opportunistic alliance with Communists in 1944-48.
2. Close association with Somoza since 1948.
3. Dictatorial tendencies.

B. Costa Ricans generally support government.

1. Even followers of Ulate (opposition leader and former president) have volunteered to fight "invaders."
2. Ulate, like Figueres, is old enemy of Calderon and Picado.

C. No defections reported from Civil Guard, which led by men of unquestioned loyalty to Figueres.

IV. Collapse of revolt will not end bad blood between Costa Rica and neighbors.

A. Nicaraguan and Venezuelan leaders, who sponsored revolt, still determined eliminate Figueres. May now try assassination.

B. Somoza of Nicaragua himself a target for assassins. Opposition (Conservative Party) allegedly plotting against him--Figueres would be happy to help Nicaraguan plotters.

V. Prompt action has raised OAS prestige, although Latin "dictators" resent what they consider US "intervention."

- A. Venezuela, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic may claim action was interference.
- B. However, others--notably Uruguay, Ecuador--and "liberal-democratic" opinion throughout hemisphere will support OAS action.